



U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr., Chairman

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News Advisory

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GAO Finds SSA Foot-Dragging on Enhancing Security of Social Security Cards

Sensenbrenner: Report Illustrates Why Employer Verification in House-Passed Border Security Bill is Essential

WASHINGTON, D.C. - House Judiciary Committee Chairman F. James Sensenbrenner (R – Wis.) today announced the release of a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report that finds the Social Security Administration (SSA) has stalled compliance with the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act requirements that the SSA undertake strong efforts to safeguard the Social Security card.

“This report illustrates why the employment verification provisions in the House-passed border security bill are essential. The Social Security card, and the ease with which it is counterfeited in dark alleys across the United States, is the weakest link among the documents presented to employers. We need to move beyond a paper based employment verification system as soon as possible. However, that does not excuse foot-dragging by the SSA,” Chairman Sensenbrenner stated.

Chairman Sensenbrenner added, “I would like to see the Attorney General, the FBI Director, and the Secretary of Homeland Security participate actively in the ongoing interagency task force, and press the Commissioner of Social Security to take the Congressional mandate and do a lot more than just issue another paper card that anyone can counterfeit on a good copy machine.”

The SSA waited nearly one year to consult with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to form the statutorily required interagency task force to study safeguards for the card. By the time SSA convened the interagency task force, the group had less than 6 months to propose new safeguards for the card to meet the required compliance date. To compound the delay, the SSA

is unwilling to study security enhancements beyond those available for printing the card on paper.

A summary of the GAO report's highlights is available at <http://judiciary.house.gov/media/pdfs/GAOSSNreporthighlights3-29-06.pdf> . The GAO report is available at <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06303.pdf> .

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